

2 March 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, CA

SUBJECT: Evidence of Nationalism in the
Ukrainian SSR

1. This memorandum is for your information. It summarizes some recent events in the Ukrainian SSR which bear on the subject of anti-Russian, nationalist feelings and manifestations on the part of minority nationalities in the Soviet Union.

2. The chronic problem of national unrest in the non-Russian republics of the USSR appears to be of continuing concern to the Soviet leadership. National groups have as a whole been resisting with some success the Soviet policy of amalgamation of nations, which in practice places the Russian in the role of big brother. This policy of fusion appears to be resented and resisted most vigorously by elements of the intelligentsia of the various nations, anxious to preserve their separate cultures. The critical factor in the struggle is nationality language, which embodies the national differences and expresses the various cultures in unique ways. A recent change in terminology in the Soviet press from "amalgamation of nations" to "the-bringing-closer-together of nations" was clearly intended as a concession to the minorities.

3. The attached cable concerns a Soviet Ukrainian national, Yuriy LITVIN, who on 8 January pushed his way past Soviet militiamen into the Canadian Embassy in Moscow. LITVIN did not ask for asylum. He wanted to register with Western representatives a protest against the subjugation of the Ukrainian people and to transmit an appeal from Soviet political prisoners. He also requested an opportunity to record for Ukrainians abroad nationalist poetry he had written. He claimed to have served a ten-year sentence in various prison camps for conducting anti-Soviet propaganda. He said that most of the inmates of the prison camps were political dissenters,

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including nationalists, anti-regime intellectuals and religious offenders (representing the three great stumbling blocks to total Soviet control). LITVIN said that there was a large group of nationalists being investigated in Kiev, Lvov and Tarnopol, and that more Ukrainian nationalists had arrived in the prison camp in Mordva in December 1965.

4. The LITVIN incident is but the latest of a continuing series of indications that Soviet Ukrainians are resisting Russification measures. Our sources recently received information from a nationalist organization that 20-40 Ukrainians were arrested by Soviet authorities in August 1965, following a gathering of students and young writers in Zvenyhorodka near Kiev, where they had gathered to read nationalist literature. Among those arrested were two young writers and literary critics with whom contact had been established by Project AERODYNAMIC assets about two years ago. They had openly expressed nationalist sentiments in the press and publicly before the Union of Ukrainian Writers. Some of the apprehended were released; others were sent to prison. It may be that the latter were the December arrivals in Mordva mentioned by LITVIN. Due to the reluctance of Canadian officials to become involved with LITVIN, to the best of our knowledge no specifics were recorded that might confirm the mutual identity of these two groups. A recent visitor from Poland gave a similar report of arrests in Kiev in August and September 1965. Another AERODYNAMIC source reported "heavy losses" in Volhynia and Lvov, where an undetermined number of individuals had been shot for activities corresponding to those in Zvenyhorodka.

5. An AERODYNAMIC source who visited the Soviet Union in the summer of 1965 was introduced in Lvov to several Ukrainians who were allegedly members of a secret student organization, the aim of which was to encourage the development of nationalist feelings among Ukrainians and to protest all forms of Russification. Members of the organization hand-copy nationalist poetry and documents expressing indignation and protest against Russification measures and distribute them by hand to their fellow Ukrainians.

6. Leading educators in the Ukraine have been calling for an increase in the number of Ukrainian-language textbooks, for courses in Ukrainian history and the need to "imbue the children with a love of their native language." Repeated requests have been made by Soviet citizens to emigre contacts for Ukrainian-language history books and literature.

7. Soviet Ukrainian representatives at the United Nations have shown not only a willingness but an eagerness to participate in dialogue with our AERODYNAMIC sources, which is a complete reversal of earlier policy. They have requested and received copies of nationalist emigre publications. This literature may serve either a defensive purpose, permitting Soviet authorities to be sufficiently well informed to counter the Ukrainian nationalist line, or Soviet Ukrainians may, under this cover, wish to obtain literature in their native Ukrainian which is unobtainable in the USSR. They also may be trying to use the emigration, in a most sophisticated game, as a pressure device on Moscow. Soviet Ukrainians have confided to our sources that such pressure tactics have in the past obtained for them concessions in the publishing field and permission to commemorate holidays in honor of national heroes. Written and tape-recorded literature received by AERODYNAMIC sources and personal conversations with Soviet Ukrainians contribute regular expressions of national sentiment. In a document smuggled to the West last year, copies of which are being hand-circulated in the Ukraine, angry indignation was expressed over a fire in the library of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, allegedly set by the Soviet authorities, in which irreplaceable Ukrainian literary treasures were destroyed.

8. Through an AERODYNAMIC asset, CIA was able to obtain a copy of a Soviet Ukrainian film which, as a result of the controversy it evoked in the Soviet Union over its religious and nationalist flavor, was recalled from all Soviet theaters and put into moth balls after a period of two months.

9. It is interesting to note the recent increasing flow of comment from our Moscow Embassy on nationalist manifestations in several parts of the Soviet Union. I believe that this is an aspect of the Soviet picture which will bear close watching in the days ahead.

David E. Murphy
Chief, SR Division

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